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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Summary: On July 17, Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies gave extensive coverage to the 2009 World Games, which began in Kaohsiung the evening of the 16th. Straight news coverage also focused on developments in cross-Straits relations and other local political issues. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" discussed the recent riots that broke out in China's Xinjiang region and independence activities in Tibet, Xinjiang and Taiwan, respectively. The article said that current U.S. policy insists on the maintenance of the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, which is akin to supporting Taiwan's de facto independence, and what is absent is nothing but a name and a form. End summary.

"Taiwan Independence, Tibetan Independence, and Xinjiang Independence"

Washington correspondent Norma Fu wrote in his column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 120,000] (7/17):

"... The United States has always regarded Tibet as a country independent of China, and as a result, Congress enacted a law clearly indicating that Tibet is an occupied country. The State Department also has an office with officials dealing especially with Tibetan affairs. Both the Voice of America and Radio Free Asia broadcast Tibetan-language programs, and in the private sector, there is a 'Campaign for Tibet' organization dedicated to lobbying and fund-raising for Tibet around-the-clock. Well-known movie star Richard Gere is also a loyal worshiper of the Dalai Lama. All these are something that Xinjiang has never enjoyed. [Nonetheless,] it goes without saying that the nuclear facilities set up by Beijing in Xinjiang and the U.S. listening stations there, joined by the rich oil reserves in the area, have forced the United States not to overlook the unrest in Xinjiang.

In addition to [activists for] Tibetan independence and Xinjiang independence, there are [activists pushing for] Taiwan independence.

When compared [with the other activists], the Taiwan independence activists are in the most favorable situation. They are free from direct persecution by communist China and are not forced to live in exile or homelessly all their lives like the activists for Tibetan and Xinjiang independence do. The Taiwan independence activists can return to Taiwan anytime they want and enjoy all the rights that the people of Taiwan enjoy. ... As a matter of fact, Taiwan has been practically independent over the past half century; namely, it has enjoyed the state of de facto independence, as referred to in the international law. What it does not have is merely de jure independence.

"The current policy of the United States upholds the maintenance of the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, which must not be altered by [either side of the Strait]. Such a policy is tantamount to supporting Taiwan's de facto independence, and what is absent is nothing but a name and a form. In earlier years, the Taiwan people were unable to call their own shots, and their yearning for independence was thus understandable. But now Taiwan has had three elected presidents; would it not run the risk of 'pushing the

envelope' if the island still embraces and calls for independence?"

WANG